

Memo

To: Senator Thomas G. Courtney and Representative Vicki Lensing

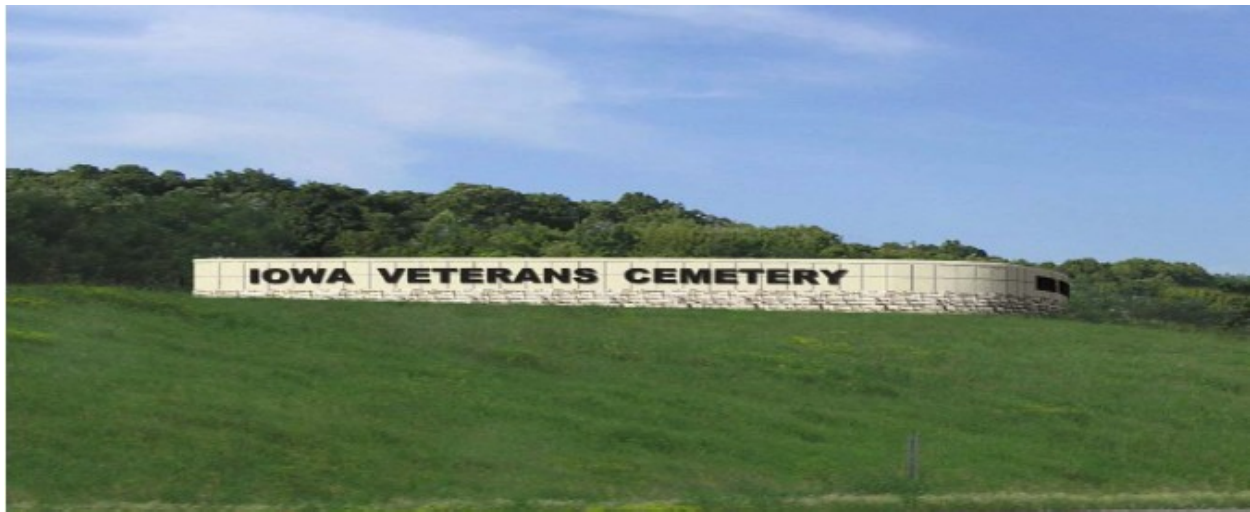
From: Patrick Palmersheim

Date: 6/12/2007

Re: Government Oversight – Update, Iowa Veterans Cemetery

The Iowa Veterans Cemetery project is moving forward. The following provides an update:

- **Director Position Filled** – The cemetery Director position was filled with a new hire on April 6, 2007. Steve Young has filled that position. As Governor Culver noted in his press release, “I am very pleased to have Steve Young, an experienced administrator with an outstanding military background, accept this important position. Steve will ensure that the Iowa Veterans Cemetery is a proper final resting place for Iowa’s distinguished veterans.”
- **Bid Proposals** - On May 1, 2007 the Iowa Department of Administrative Services, on behalf of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, received bid proposals for the construction of the Iowa Veterans Cemetery project. Three bids were received. The Hansen Company, Inc., a Johnston, Iowa based General Contractor, was selected and was provided a Notice of Intent to Award on May 14, 2007.
- **Federal Grant** – The USDVA State Cemetery Grant Program indicates that it takes 90 days to process the paperwork for the Secretary’s signature authorizing the release of the grant, which permits the state to provide its contractor a Notice of Intent to begin construction. The 90 day window began on May 1st (bid opening), which overlaps the contractor’s bid guarantee period. The department was requested on July 20th (80th day) to “tickle” USDVA to have the Secretary sign the authorizing paperwork. Requests to have this done sooner have not met with success.
- **Webpage** – The department is indebted to the Department of Administrative Services for arranging to have Iowa Interactive assist the cemetery Director in creating a dedicated Iowa Veterans Cemetery homepage linked to the department’s homepage. It can be viewed at: www.iowava.org/vetcemetery. The cemetery homepage has many interactive features describing the project, history of the state cemetery program administered by USDVA, a “Friends of the Cemetery” donation program link, and construction progress with photos, to name a few. The webpage also links to relevant federal sites. The homepage was unveiled on June 15, 2007.
- **Fundraising** – USDVA’s State Cemetery Grant Program funds the development and construction of the project. The state essentially contracts with the federal government assuring that it will appropriately fund the continuing operation and maintenance of the cemetery. A state risks having grant monies recouped by the federal government if it does not. Fundraising is not a means by which this assurance is provided. Fundraising is designed to generate private funds to be used for memorials and beautification projects on cemetery grounds, which are not covered by federal grant monies. An example would be the Iowa Veterans Commemorative Medals that have been sold (and are still available for sale). A fundraising effort was kicked off on June 15, 2007, to generate funds to pay for the construction of a wall running along Interstate 80 announcing to travelers heading east and west that



Dream Becomes Reality

In 2001, a US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) study identified Iowa as needing a dedicated, state-owned and operated veterans' cemetery. The study revealed over 280,000 veterans living in Iowa, with about 92,000 living within a 75-mile radius of Des Moines.

The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) began fundraising for the cemetery on Veterans Day in 2004 with Bronze and Silver Commemorative Iowa Veterans Medals. In 2005, Iowa's legislature gave IDVA the authority to "establish and operate" a state veterans cemetery. Early the following year, two generous donors contributed land parcels totaling 96 acres for that purpose. On this land, the Iowa Veterans Cemetery will be constructed. A groundbreaking ceremony was held on Veterans Day 2006—in only a few years the dream becomes a reality.



State Cemetery Grant Program

USDVA's State Cemetery Grant Program is funding the construction of the cemetery. The cemetery will be managed and operated by state employees, some of which, themselves, are veterans. Cemetery operation will be state funded. Memorials and beautification of the cemetery grounds are provided for by public donation.

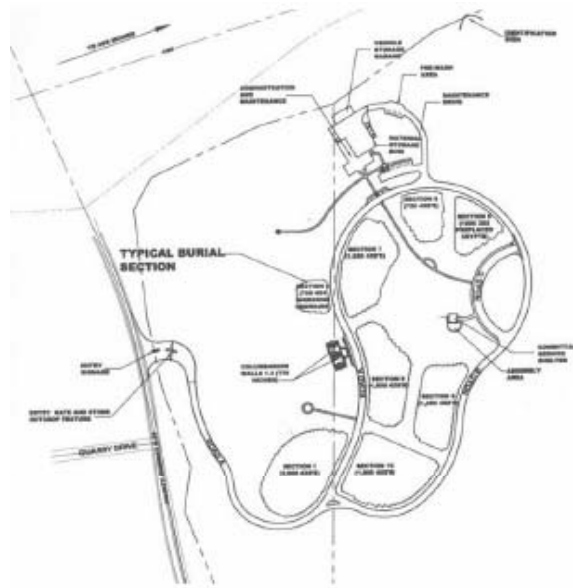
Friends of the Cemetery

The "Friends of the Cemetery" program is designed to allow families, friends and organizations to memorialize their loved ones through the beautification of the cemetery grounds. Examples of memorials under consideration include an Avenue of Flags, memorial trees, commemorative benches, designated artwork, organizational stones in a Memorial Garden, Donors Wall plaque in the Administration Building, and engraved walkway stones. View future "Friends" campaigns on the cemetery's webpage at: www.iowava.org/vetcemetery.

"Friends" Donation Campaign

The magnificent wall depicted on the front of this brochure strikingly announces to I-80 travelers heading east or west that at this site Iowans are proudly *honoring those who served*. The wall is 7' tall and angles east and west approximately 60' from the end of

each wing to the center of the front arch. It is constructed with stone. Black metal lettering boldly announces the cemetery's presence. It will be illuminated at night. This project must be funded by donations. IDVA, operating as a state instrumentality, created a dedicated fund for this purpose (Veterans Cemetery Fund), which qualifies each contribution as tax deductible. We are asking you to consider donating to this worthy cause, which has to be completed during construction. The campaign to seek donations to build the wall requires \$100,000 to complete the project.



Project – Phase 1

Phase 1 of the project involves the development of approximately 40 acres, which will include a main entrance feature, 12,110 gravesites, development of an Administration and Maintenance Complex, assembly area, Committal Service Shelter, Memorial Walk, and supporting infrastructure. This phase is estimated to meet the needs of eligible veterans and their families for 20 years. Phases 2-4 are available for future expansion.



Cemetery Buildings and Grounds

Construction begins in late July 2007, with an anticipated opening around Memorial Day 2008. The cemetery is located 10-miles west of Des Moines in Dallas County near Van Meter, Iowa (Exit 113). The property runs along I-80 southeast of the exit.

The cemetery grounds are composed of mostly flat to gently rolling hills with open meadows and a variety of trees, grasses and shrubs. The design of the cemetery remains in keeping with the natural beauty of the surrounding countryside.



COMMITTAL SERVICE SHELTER

Honoring Those Who Served

Graveside services are not provided at state veteran cemeteries. A committal service takes the place of the graveside service. All funeral services are held prior to arrival at the cemetery. Committal services, if elected by the family, are held at the Committal Service Shelter. An Honor Guard Program will be available.

Message from the Governor

Lt. Governor Patty Judge and I have deep respect and admiration for the sacrifices made by our veterans, and the daily challenges encountered by all of our active duty military members and their families. The Iowa Veterans Cemetery is Iowa's public statement of respect—we are proud of you all. We ask that Iowans and corporate partners consider supporting the "Friends of the Cemetery" campaign to build the I-80 wall project with a generous contribution.



Chester J. Culver
Governor

What can you do to help?

Become a member of the "Friends of the Cemetery" program. The I-80 wall project is our first donation campaign. It is time sensitive because construction on the cemetery is scheduled to begin in late July 2007.

Future memorial and beautification programs will be announced on the Iowa Veterans Cemetery homepage found at: www.iowava.org/vetcemetery.

DONATION FORM

Yes, I want to become a "Friend of the Cemetery" by contributing to the \$100,000 fundraising drive to construct the wall announcing to Interstate 80 travelers that the Iowa Veterans Cemetery proudly occupies this site to *honor those who served*.

Enclosed is my charitable tax deductible contribution to make the dream a reality.

Make check payable to the **Veterans Cemetery Fund**.

. \$_____ General Donation	. \$100+ Meritorious Donation
. \$250+ Bronze Star Donation	. \$500+ Legion of Merit Donation
. \$1000+ Silver Star Donation	. \$_____ Distinguished Corporate Partner

Your canceled check with this brochure should be sufficient for tax purposes. If you require more, please contact the Cemetery staff. Thank you for your generous donation and becoming a "Friend of the Cemetery." And, most importantly, thank you for *honoring those who served*. Mail your donation to:

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs
Attn: Director, Iowa Veterans Cemetery
Camp Dodge, Bldg. A6A
7105 NW 70th Avenue
Johnston, Iowa 50131-1824

For further questions, you may call us at:
(515) 242-5331

Iowa is *honoring those who served* at this site. The enclosure depicts the tri-fold and donation form being used for this effort in pdf. format.

- **Construction** – Construction is expected to begin around late July 2007, with an anticipated opening around Memorial Day 2008. However, this date will likely slip because the contract called for construction to begin June 1, 2007. The cemetery Director has visited three state cemeteries (one under construction) and one national cemetery. During each visit he spent time with his counterpart and cemetery staff and contractors discussing operations. These visits will better prepare him and the department to problem solve during the construction phase, and eventually, to run an effective operation when it opens.
- **Hiring of Staff** – The cemetery Director has been researching position descriptions from other state and national cemeteries to determine the appropriate mix of duties required of cemetery staff. The plan is to first hire a cemetery representative (office support) this summer. The Director will be spending considerable time at the construction site and will require administrative support in his absence (e.g., numerous daily calls are answered about the cemetery and veterans and their families are seeking determinations as to their eligibility to be interred at the cemetery.) Additionally, the cemetery representative, like the Director, must schedule mandatory federal training. The remaining positions will be filled later in the year as the grounds and buildings begin to take shape.
- Based on USDVA estimates, the State Cemetery Grant Program has advised the department that its projected cemetery staffing will need to be more robust. As it currently stands, four FTEs (includes Director) are projected for FY08. This needs close examination. The department will be seeking permission to increase its FTE total to seven in FY09 (e.g., four grounds and three office staff). Federal formulation indicates 10.48 would be the appropriate FTE count.